

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3559

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 0495

E.O. 11652: ADS, DECLAS 12/31/75

TAGS: PINT, PINS, SF

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT CONCEDES COLORED UNIVERSITY STUDENTS CAN
RETURN WITHOUT WRITTEN UNDERTAKING TO OBSERVE RULES

REF: CAPE TOWN 475 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: COLORED STUDENTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE (UWC)
WON SIGNIFICANT VICTORY WHEN MINISTER OF COLORED RELATIONS DR. SCHALK
VAN DER MERWE ANNOUNCED JULY 10 THAT ALL REGISTERED STUDENTS WOULD
BE ALLOWED TO RETURN JULY 16 WITHOUT GIVING PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED
WRITTEN UNDERTAKING TO OBSERVE UNIVERSITY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS.
STUDENTS HAILED TRIUMPH AS RESULT PRESSURE BY BLACK COMMUNITY AND
SAID STRUGGLE FOR COMPLETE REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES WILL CONTINUE.
EARLIER UWC COUNCIL HAD MADE NEW CONCESSION BY ASKING GOVERNMENT
FOR JUDICIAL COMMISSION TO MAKE COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION OF
UNIVERSITY. MOVES FOLLOWED INTENSIVE BEHIND-SCENES WORK BY
COLORED AND WHITE ACADEMICS AND CHURCHMEN WITH VAN DER MERWE
AND UWC RECTOR KRIEL. UNPRECEDENTED DEGREE SOLIDARITY AMONG
COLOREDS AND THEIR INCREASING IDENTIFICATION WITH OTHER UNDER-
PRIVILEGED "BLACKS" (I.E. AFRICANS) MAY HAVE SIGNIFICANT LONG-
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TERM EFFECTS ON SOUTH AFRICAN RACIAL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEY WERE
UNDOUBTEDLY AMONG FACTORS INFLUENCING GOVERNMENT RESILIENCY.

2. MINISTER'S DECISION WAS BASED ON LEGAL RE-STUDY WHICH

RESULTED IN FACE-SAVING DECISION THAT UWC COUNCIL HAD NOT RPT NOT LEGAL RIGHT TO DEMAND FROM STUDENTS AS REQUISITE FOR CONTINUED ADMISSION THIS YEAR A WRITTEN UNDERTAKING TO RECOGNIZE UNIVERSITY AUTHORITY AND OBSERVE UNIVERSITY'S RULES AND REGULATIONS. "BY MERE FACT THESE STUDENTS RETURN THEY THEREBY IPSO FACTO SUBMIT TO BOTH THE AUTHORITIES AND RULES AND REGULATIONS OF UNIVERSITY."

3. UWC STUDENTS ACTION COMMITTEE STATEMENT SAW MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT AS "INEVITABLE RESULT OF PRESSURE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON AUTHORITIES BY BLACK COMMUNITY. WE HAVE BEEN VICTORIOUS IN THIS BATTLE BUT STRUGGLE WILL GO ON FOR COMPLETE REDRESS OF OUR GRIEVANCES." PHILOSOPHER-POET PROFESSOR ADAM SMALL, WHO RESIGNED FROM UWC STAFF ON JUNE 19 (REFTEL), HAS BEEN MOST ELOQUENT SPOKESMAN FOR COLOREDS DURING CRISIS. HE STATED THAT MINISTER'S DECISION WHILE "A VICTORY FOR US ONLY IMAGES FARCICAL NATURE OF THIS SICK SOCIETY. INITIATIVE TO CURE IT IS OURS NOW." LABOR PARTY LEADER SONNY LEON WELCOMED DECISION BUT ADDED THAT JUDICIAL COMMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE OF A STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL WERE OTHER STEPS NECESSARY FOR REORGANIZATION OF SYSTEM. KWAZULU CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI (SEE BELOW) WAS MORE SKEPTICAL. HE SAW DECISION AS SMALL VICTORY BUT FELT CONDITIONS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED AT BLACK UNIVERSITIES. UNITED PARTY SPOKESMEN APPROVED MINISTER'S ACTION WITH MYBURGH STREICHER, CAPE LEADER OF PARTY, URGING THAT CONTROL OF UWC BE HANDED OVER TO COLOREDS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. EARLIER ADAM SMALL IN ADDRESS TO COLORED AND WHITE LIBERAL GROUPS HAMMERED POINT THAT ACADEMIC DISCONTENT OF BLACK STUDENTS IS MERELY A REFLECTION OF BLACK BITTERNESS ABOUT THE WHOLE SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY. HE CITED CASE OF POLICEMAN AT UWC WHO TOLD STUDENT "YOU ARE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, YOU WILL GET TROUBLE". THIS HE CLAIMED WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF WHITE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY, WHERE TO BE HONESTLY CRITICAL OF STATE OF AFFAIRS IS CONSIDERED TO BE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. UWC STUDENTS ACTION COMMITTEE, BACKED BY SMALL AND MANY PARENTS, HAD BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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PROCEEDING WITH PLAN FOR PRIVATE "FREE UNIVERSITY" WITH SYLLABUS MEANINGFUL TO BLACKS. IDEAS INCLUDED POSSIBLE ENROLLMENT AT FIRST AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA OR SOME OTHER CORRESPONDENCE COURSE INSTITUTION AND USING UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN (UCT) FACILITIES. OVER 170 MEMBERS OF UCT ACADEMIC STAFF REPORTEDLY OFFERED HELP. OVERSEAS UNIVERSITIES INCLUDING AMERICAN AND BRITISH, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH BLACK STUDIES DEPARTMENTS, WERE ALSO TO BE CONTACTED. WHILE PROF. SMALL ANNOUNCED "PEOPLES' FREE EDUCATION FRONT" AT MASS MEETING JULY 8 (SEE BELOW) AS ONE FACTOR IN "VAST LIBERATION MOVEMENT", LEADING COLORED EDUCATIONIST DR. RICHARD VAN DER ROSS DOUBTED FEASIBILITY OF FREE UNIVERSITY BECAUSE OF

PROBLEMS SUCH AS INSURMOUNTABLE COSTS. HE SAID IDEA HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY STUDIED AFTER PASSING OF EXTENSION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION ACT IN 1959 AND FOUND IMPRACTICAL. ADDITIONALLY, VAN DER ROSS CONSIDERED PLAN A RED HERRING ACROSS REAL PURPOSE OF GETTING UWC REOPENED ON BEST TERMS INCLUDING UNCONDITIONAL STUDENT READMISSIONS. ACTION COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED LAST NIGHT IT WAS STILL DETERMINED TO WORK TOWARDS A FREE UNIVERSITY INDEPENDENT FROM WHITE PREJUDICE.

5. ON JULY 8 COLORED STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS ORGANIZED MASS RALLY ATTENDED BY 12,000 IN CAPE TOWN COLORED SUBURB OF CRAWFORD. PURPOSE WAS TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH ABOVE-MENTIONED PEOPLES FREE EDUCATION FRONT AND GET PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR UNCONDITIONAL REINSTATEMENT OF UWC STUDENTS. MAIN SPEAKER, CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELEZI, CALLED ON GOVERNMENT "NOT TO FORCE OUR PEOPLE INTO FOOLISH ACTIONS THAT WILL DESTROY SOUTH AFRICA". HE SAID HE CAME TO SPEAK BECAUSE HE CONSIDERED IT HIS DUTY TO BLACKS (I.E. COLOREDS) TO IDENTIFY HIMSELF WITH THEM AGAINST INJUSTICES PERPETUATED AGAINST BLACK SOCIETY. OTHER SPEAKERS INCLUDED ADAM SMALL; SONNY LEON, LEADER OF COLORED LABOR PARTY, WHO CALLED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED BLACK FRONT; AND MRS. FATIMA MEER, INDIAN LECTURER AT NATAL UNIVERSITY.

6. EDITORIAL COMMENT PRIOR TO GOVERNMENT CONCESSION INCLUDED NATIONALIST DIE BURGER'S CALL FOR "MEN OF GOODWILL TO DRAW A CORDON AROUND THIS PROBLEM (UWC DISPUTE) AND KEEP OUT THE EXPLOITERS AND FIREBRANDS". BUTHELEZI CRITICIZED THIS THROWING AROUND OF LABELS AS A WELL-TRIED WAY OF PASSING THE BUCK. CAPE TIMES (JULY 10) SAW SIGNIFICANCE IN RECEPTION GIVEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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BUTHELEZI BY COLORED AUDIENCE AS SUGGESTING GROWING SENSE OF COMMON PURPOSE BETWEEN AFRICAN AND COLORED SOUTH AFRICANS-- WHICH SHOULD PROMPT SERIOUS REFLECTION IN THE WHITE COMMUNITY AND IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER IN PRETORIA. JOHANNESBURG'S VADERLAND (JULY 9) SIMILARLY SAW CAPE TOWN RALLY AS HAVING UNDERTONES THAT SHOULD STIR (WHITE PEOPLE TO UNEASINESS. "THE OPEN WAY IN WHICH WELL-KNOWN COLORED LEADERS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES WITH THE BLACK POWER MOVEMENT IS SHOWING CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME."

7. COMMENT: SAG WAS UNDOUBTEDLY WISE TO MAKE CONCESSION IT HAS IN FACT OF NEW AND UNPRECEDENTED MEASURE OF COMMON PURPOSE SHOWN BY HERETOFOR BADLY SPLIT COLORED COMMUNITY. DANGER SIGNS TO FURTHER DETERIORATION OF COLORED-WHITE RELATIONS WERE THERE FOR ALL TO SEE. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON FOLLOW-UP TO OTHER STUDENT GRIEVANCES AND, BROADLY SPEAKING, WHETHER WHITE AUTHORITIES WILL START MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT COLOREDS (AND BLACKS) ONLY AFTER MORE ADVANCE CONSULTATION. OTHER EFFECTS OF UWC CRISIS WHICH CONCEIVABLY COULD MAKE IT SOMETHING OF A MILESTONE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL HISTORY

ARE THE CLOSER IDENTIFICATION OF COLOREDS WITH BLACKS
(ALTHOUGH THIS COULD BE TEMPORARY) AND, IN GENERAL, AN
IMPETUS TO BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS.
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